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Unlike the Miao

in Kweichow, the Miao on Hainan are united; 563
and unlike the Li, the Miao do not form large 361
villages. 27

There is little social stratification in Miao 563
communities in the Central-South. The Miao 562 ●
women work in the field together with their men.
They do not observe the marriage bond as strictly
as the Han Chinese women. They do not suffer
particularly under the marriage system, and the
enforcement of the new Marriage Law by the
Communists make no material difference to the
status of Miao women in their own communities.

F. The Li of Hainan Island

Although the Ha and the Chi are actually two 563
branches of the Li people, the Li proper and the
Chi and Ha differ culturally and discriminate
against each other. The Ha, who claim to be Han
immigrants during the Han dynasty are more
advanced culturally.

All of the Li people use wooden plows and
depend upon Han Chinese merchants for the
importation of iron farming implements, which
have always been inadequately supplied in the Li

27. Min-tsu Cheng-t'se Wen-hsien Hui-pien,
pp. 53-54.

The family in the rural areas adjacent to industrialized cities was also affected in other ways. Men of advanced years, particularly if they had a classical education or held official position, continued to be honored. However, their position of influence and authority was challenged by younger men with the personal qualities of dynamic leadership and success. Ancestor worship continued to give a greater primacy to males in the family, but the ability of daughters to earn a wage enhanced their value to the family and made their early marriage into another family less desirable. It should be noted, however, that women of farming and laboring families worked outside of the home only out of sheer economic necessity. Neither sex approved of female employment in the factory; whenever possible, it was avoided or terminated. Among upper-class families, women with modern education began gradually to seek employment in the professions and to regard such work as a means of establishing permanent personal and economic independence.

The independent family in the modern city was most subject to change. Although the influence of the past remained strong, the city families tended toward the nuclear, democratic form. Thus, the old criteria of status based on sex, age, and generation were undermined. This tendency was strongest among the new clerical, managerial, and professional groups in the city. They came mostly from the old well-to-do merchant and gentry class which could afford modern education, sometimes abroad, for their children.

property of their parents, but belong first of all to the state and to the people, and...the interests of the people should be the highest criterion governing our actions toward our parents."¹³

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An editorial in the People's Daily in March 1955 notes that remnant feudal ideologies still obstructed "the participation of women in Socialist construction and various political activities." The editorial then goes on to state that it is in order to promote the political and production zeal of women that their rights must be promoted and protected and the Marriage Law implemented.¹⁴ Various comments on the Marriage Law inspired by the regime stress Lenin's dictum that sex relationships and family problems are not individual or small affairs but matters of great social, economic, and political significance.¹⁵

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B. Implementation of the Marriage Law

As the Nationalist Government had made no attempt to put into effect the marriage and family provisions of its 1930-31 codes among the rural population, the spirit and provisions of the Marriage Law were new and alien to the great

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13. S.C.M.P., 973, p. 31.

14. Ibid., 106, p. 15.

15. See, for instance, C.B., 275, p. 4; and S.C.M.P., 1048, pp. 30-31.

goal of one unit for every county was fulfilled. (There were 517 counties in Central-South China, according to the 1955 People's Handbook.) On a lower level, among the 4,386 ch'u in Central-South China, 670 health centers and 136 clinics were opened. Since 1949, according to the report, 134 additional hospitals had been opened in the cities and the number of trained workers had tripled. Approximately 6,605 doctors were reported.⁸ 744

III. THE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

One of the most significant early documents of the Chinese Communist regime was the Common Program. The health of women and children was given special attention in Article 48, which specified that attention should be paid to the protection of the health of mothers, infants, and children.⁹ The Constitution, adopted on September 20, 1954, provides for the physical and mental development of the young people and the rights of women.¹⁰ In speeches and reports on health matters in Communist China, the promotion of the well-being of women and children 744
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8. Chang-chiang Jih-pao [Yangtze Daily], Sept. 30, 1952, p. 3.

9. The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1949, p. 8.

10. Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1954, Article 94, 96, pp. 98-99.

has almost always been given prominence. The training of midwives, the re-education of "old-style" midwives, the establishment of maternity stations and health centers for women and children, and the prevention of various children's diseases have been particularly publicized in public health work in the Central-South Region as well as in the country as a whole.

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In mid-1952, in the six provinces of Central-South China, it was reported that 30,500 midwives were trained, and 50,000 - 60,000 additional midwives were scheduled to finish training by the end of the year. Other types of health cadres were trained to work for the betterment of the health of women and children. The same report expressed the hope that in a year or two there would be two midwives in every hsiang (village) in the region.¹¹

When the vice-chairman of the Kwangtung People's Government made his four-year progress report in 1954, he claimed that 4,717 medical, nursing, and maternity workers and 19,000 midwives in the rural areas had been trained during that period in Kwangtung. As proof of the betterment of health of women and children in Kwangtung, he cited the results of an investigation in Yungyun (Weng-yüan) which showed a decrease in the infant mortality rate from 30 per cent to 2 per cent after the introduction of modern obstetrics in 1951.¹² (see p 352)

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11. Yangtze Daily, Sept. 30, 1952, p. 3.

In Canton, in addition to similar celebrations, the Municipal "Children's Palace" was formally opened on June 1, 1952. As a "cultural center" for the children, the "palace" was reported to have a capacity of 1,500, and three departments -- political education, artistic education, and a department of science -- as well as a children's library. ³⁶

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A three-year progress report on child welfare was made by the Central-South Democratic Women's Federation in 1952. Incomplete statistics showed that 70 creches to care for 2,000 children had been established in the urban districts, and that temporary organizations in the rural areas helped to care for 30,000 children during the busy farm seasons. In the municipality of Wuhan before the Communist "liberation" in May 1949, the report stated, there had been only one crèche caring for 35 children, but in mid-1952 the number of creches had increased to 28, caring for 1,000 children. The report claimed such achievements as a lower death rate for both infants and mothers and better health provisions for women and children. (See chapter on Health and Sanitation.) However, it also pointed out that in the many phases of child welfare, there was much need for improvement, especially in raising the standard of education for welfare workers. ³⁷

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The first conference of the workers in women's and children's welfare was convened October 3-12,

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36. South China Daily, June 1, 1952, p. 1.

37. Yangtze Daily, June 1, 1952, p. 3.

1951, under the aegis of the All-China Democratic Women's Federation. With national production as the prime concern the conference decided the objective of welfare work should be to serve the masses of working women and their children. Its principal tasks were to promote better health and better health conditions for women and children, and to solve the problems which arose in the rearing and education of the children of working people. At the conference it was reported that 15,700 child welfare organizations, including crèches, kindergartens, and relief institutions, had been established on the China Mainland. Another report claimed that in two years ending November 1951, some 4,340 persons were trained to care for children and 3,743 were trained as health workers to care for women and children. In the same period, 7,295,095 persons were reported to have attended the 128 exhibits arranged by propaganda agencies 38 to promote good health among women and children.

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By the end of 1952, there were 34,000 public health agencies for women and children in China as a whole, with additional mobile corps for the same purpose organized under all the provincial governments. In mining and construction works, in other enterprises, in organizations and schools, 2,738 crèches were in existence in 1952; in cities, 4,346 street crèches were set up, and in the rural areas 148,200 crèches were organized to care for some 850,000 children of agricultural families.³⁹

38. New China Daily, May 30, 1953, p. 3.

39. Ibid., April 18, 1953, p. 4.

control on foreign trade. Merchants in Kwangtung cannot acquire cheap imported consumer goods to which they had had access under the former regime. The control on smuggling meets disfavor among Kwangtung merchants who live along the international border.

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E. Women

The customary position of women in China is subordinate to that of men. This tradition was so deep-rooted that it took superhuman courage for the first women to claim their "rights"; and the pain of "emancipation" continues under the Communists.

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To the "emancipated" belongs the responsibility; this is at least theoretically true, and the Chinese women who have exchanged one form of drudgery for another are generally expected to have a degree of political consciousness similar to that of men of equal education and comparable environment. In many cases women prove to be even more "patriotic" than men as a result of the unprecedented government effort to show women that they, too, can achieve enviable social recognition by a show of "patriotism."

How much improvement in the status of the women has been brought about by the Communists? Women are encouraged to participate in political activities; more tangibly and closer to their daily life, they are given child care, adult education, and other welfare benefits if they join the working force. If the increase in the number of women workers in factories can be taken as an indication of the women's own free choice, then women in Communist China may indeed feel favorably disposed toward the

Communist regime. But upon closer observation this may not be the case; many women who undertook factory-work after 1949 may have done so as a financial necessity rather than as a result of free choice.

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The much-publicized marriage law in Communist China embodies nothing new, but its vigorous and arbitrary enforcement is unprecedented. Even this Communist law has engendered mixed feelings among the women; acceptance will mean the destruction of some of the most stubborn traditions in China. (See discussion of the marriage law in the chapter on The Family.)

Some women hold high posts in government, and "labor heroines" are found in all industries. Housewives of well-to-do families in larger cities may live in leisure, but those of families of modest means may have to work outside the home and do not resent it as long as their work is not heavy or manual in character. This means that the Communists have to continue their indoctrination of women to respect and enjoy labor. The age-group differential asserts itself in the reactions of women to the new regime; older women who had learned to live in peace with the extended family system are likely to dread the Communist effort to reduce the extended family to the conjugal family; younger women are more apt to feel favorably disposed toward the Peking regime.

F. National Minorities

The minority groups in China have never felt any great loyalty toward the larger political entity

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personages in the agricultural co-operatives and mutual-aid teams have been elected to public office. In the province of Honan, a typesetter was chosen from the trade union, and 41 presidents of agricultural co-operatives were chosen to serve in the People's Congress. Women members made up 28 per cent of the delegates to the People's Congress. In Tu-an County in Kwangsi Province, an area of minority nationalities, 37 members of the Yao people, 17 members of the Chuang people, and 13 members of the Han-Chinese were elected to serve. Nineteen of those chosen were women from the minority groups. In T'ai-shan, Kwangtung Province, 39 were elected as members of the People's Congress and 13 as members of the hsiang People's Council.²⁴

Elections in 98 per cent of the basic units of the municipalities, counties, and hsiang were to be completed by May 25, 1954. Because leaders of the Party had urged the people to exercise their right to vote, about 85-90 per cent of those eligible to vote went to the polls. The Communist propaganda agencies insist that in Shao-shan hsiang, the birthplace of Mao Tse-tung, 100 per cent of those eligible to vote did so.

It was reported that, in the province of Kiangsi, preparations for the People's Congress begun in June 1953 were completed by March 1954. In the 82 counties and 6 provincial districts and the special district of Lu Shan (Kuling), 10,000 delegates attended sessions of the People's Congress. Those winning the maximum number of votes were

24. People's Daily, May 21, 1954.